

## UK: India launches programme to attract UK investments

LONDON: [India](#) today launched a new initiative here to attract investments from small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the [UK](#) by providing them the hand- holding.

Access India Programme (AIP), launched by the Indian High Commission in the UK along with knowledge partner UK India Business Council ([UKIBC](#)), will work as a [market](#) entry support system for smaller companies with a potential to expand into the Indian market.

At a launch event in India House in London, Indian high commissioner to the UK, Y K Sinha, described it as a "first of its kind" initiative that will feed into the government's 'Make in India' programme by providing support for SMEs.

"The SME sector in the UK is very robust and vibrant and this programme will provide them the hand-holding they would need to access India," he said.

He highlighted that in the last three years India has received Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) worth USD 175 billion and that the government of India remains "committed and focused" to improving India's ranking in [ease of doing business](#).

The new AIP initiative will be geared towards implementing the 'Make in India' concept by facilitating investments from the UK but will not be limited to just 'Make in India'.

The Indian High Commission and UKIBC will study and thereafter identify UK SMEs which have considerable potential to succeed in the Indian market.

"We will not charge anything. It is a facilitation programme. We want to make sure that SMEs, without the deep pockets and battery of [legal](#) experts at the disposal of bigger companies, are able to access the Indian market," said Dinesh K Patnaik, deputy high commissioner of India to the UK.

The AIP will include six annual workshops and mentoring programmes to encourage a flow of SMEs into India.

A group of about 50 companies will be initially identified by the end of this year to begin their entry process from early 2018.

With the use of diagnostics and analysis of SME potential, the AIP will work towards creating a blended plan to link SMEs to a strong support network of prime manufacturers, OEMs, trade bodies and Chambers of Commerce.

"The programme is far-reaching, and will be implemented with the support of not only the concerned central and state government ministries in India, but also by engaging key industry partners who can support UK companies in various aspects of market entry into India.

These will include advisory, law, taxation and accounting firms," an official statement explains.

Some larger UK companies with operations already established in India will provide mentoring support to the selected AIP SMEs.

The UKIBC will assist the Indian high commission in London to plan, structure, implement, coordinate, and monitor the AIP with other programme partners, and assist in the entry of selected UK companies into India.

"This is further proof that the UK-India economic relationship is ever-strengthening at a crucial time for both countries," said Richard Heald, CEO of UKIBC.

"As an organisation with specific contracts with the UK Government and Indian Government through dialogues such as JETCO, EFD and the UK India CEO Forum, we are well placed to deliver. Once implemented, we are sure that this partnership will go some way to ensuring UK businesses get the platform they need to succeed in India," he said.

A similar model for access to India by SMEs has been trialled in Germany and the AIP in the UK has been created by improving on that model.

Based on its success, the programme could be rolled out around the world to attract investments into India. AK NSA

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